



# maintenance and dumplings



Chaz  
 [cvillette](https://cvillette.livejournal.com/)

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**MOOD:** 😊 hungry

**MUSIC:** Damien Rice - Dogs

Sunday is the day I get everything done I need to do to get through the week fed and clothed. I crank up the music, do laundry, clean, and cook. The clothed part isn't such a big deal-- laundromat down the block!--but the fed thing takes military organization.

A lot of times, Jeff and Brandon from down the hall come over and "do their homework," which means sitting at the table getting me to teach them basic algebra (Above their grade level, both of them!) and helping me cook.

Today was dumpling day. We also roasted a chicken (Scarborough Faire chicken!) and learned knife technique. No beheadings, a good day in the kitchen.

- 1 roasting chicken
- fresh parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme
- fresh garlic
- fresh ginger

Clean out the chicken. Save the heart and some of the fat for the pork filling in the dumplings. Save the neck for stock. If you have a cat, give the liver to the cat. Save out two pieces of internal fat for larding.

Tuck the chicken's wings under themselves and loosen up the skin on the breast with your hands. Underneath it on each side, tuck sprigs of the fresh herbs, julienneed strips of peeled fresh ginger, sliced garlic, and the reserved chicken fat. Inside the bird, put the rest of the herbs and garlic and ginger. Put it in a roasting pan (I just use my medium-sized cast-iron skillet) in a 350-degree oven until done, which is when the probe on a meat thermometer put deep into the breast meat but not against bone reads 150. (I also put some sprigs of rosemary under the bird in the pan.)

Take the bird out, take it out of the pan, cover it, and let it rest for ten minutes or so.

Unless you are serving it immediately to guests, go ahead and pull the wings off and eat them standing up at the counter. Yes, and the skin too: once you put it in the fridge, that will be ruined anyway.

Save the bones for that stock.

Yay!

 [leahbobot](https://leahbobot.livejournal.com/) (<https://leahbobot.livejournal.com/>) and  [matociquala](https://matociquala.livejournal.com/) (<https://matociquala.livejournal.com/>) wanted the .

It goes like this:

Sponge:

- 2 tsp yeast
- 1 cup lukewarm water
- 1 cup flour

Second stage of the dough:

- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 2 tablespoons Crisco or vegetable oil
- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1/4 cup sugar

For prep:

- 2 tablespoons sesame seed oil for savory stuffings, or vegetable oil for sweet stuffings

Make the sponge: (This gives the yeast a head start before you dump all that flour in on it and make it work.)

Dissolve the yeast in lukewarm water in a bigger bowl than you think you need. Add 1 cup of flour and mix them together thoroughly. Cover the bowl with a clean cloth, and put it someplace warm, like next to the stove where the chicken is roasting in the oven, and let the sponge rise for about an hour, until bubbles appear.

Dissolve sugar and vegetable shortening in 1/2 cup boiling water, stirring until the sugar and shortening are all melted. Cool this mess until it's just lukewarm, or you will murder your yeast. Boiling

in oil! Aieee! Then, pour it into the sponge, and begin adding additional flour until it achieves the texture of a soft dough. (You may use more or less than 3 1/2 cups of flour; all dough recipes are approximations.

Don't throw the towel in the wash yet.

You will have to knead the last cup or so of flour into the dough. Knead on a lightly floured board (or your kitchen table, if you are me, because waist-height is the best place to knead, because you can get your weight into it), adding flour slowly until the dough is smooth and only slightly tacky, not sticky.

It should feel, says Juuuulia, "like a baby's bottom." Not being overly familiar with baby bottoms, I'd say it feels more or less like a woman's breast.

What you are doing here is developing gluten in the flour, giving it elasticity and a chewy texture. The process it to sprinkle flour, fold the dough over, press it together with the heel of your hands, massage it a little, give it a quarter-turn, sprinkle flour, fold it over, repeat. Occasionally turn the lump of dough over, sprinkle more flour on your work surface, and work on the other side.

It takes a while: at some point during this process, your neighbors are probably going to become convinced that you are having leisurely, tight-lipped, enthusiastic sex on the kitchen table. Just smile brightly at them and wink when you go down to check the mail tomorrow.

Wash out your big bowl and dry it, then grease it with a little oil. Put the dough into it and tuck it back over beside the oven or in another toasty warm but not too hot place. Turn the dough over in the bowl so both sides get a coating of oil; this, and covering the bowl with that damp cloth again, will keep it from getting a skin. Let it rise until it doubles in bulk, about 2 hours.

Divide the dough into two portions. Knead each portion for 2 minutes. Then roll each section into a snake about a foot long and two inches wide, just like you made clay snakes in grade school. Cut each one into 12 pieces (24 total).

Don't throw the towel in the wash yet.

Flatten each piece with the palm of your hand and then with a rolling pin or wine bottle or whatever, roll each one out into a 3 inch circle.

Brush each one with sesame seed oil or vegetable oil. Indent the middle of each circle with a chopstick or spoon handle to make a little cup. Put your stuffing there. (I am making pork ones, and mung bean paste ones.) Fold each circle in half so that it becomes a half moon, or draw it up like a little purse and squish the edges together and turn it over so it's a beautiful little hemispherical bun. For the half-moons, crimp the edges with a fork or chopsticks.

Place each roll on separate square piece of parchment paper and cover them with your damp cloth *again*. Aren't you glad you didn't throw it in the wash? Let the buns rise to double again, about 30 minutes. Remove towel.

At this point, you can freeze them (on a tray, and then once they are frozen just leave them on the parchment squares and toss them in a Ziplock bag) or you can steam them. Either in a steamer or a colander over briskly boiling water for 10-15 minutes, 20 for a raw meat filling probably.

You can actually freeze them cooked, too.

Stuffings for those are easy:

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Mung Bean Paste filling:

Open a can of mung bean paste. ;-)

No, really. That's all I do.

Pork and mushroom filling

- whatever pork you have in the freezer or fridge (I used two slightly freezerburned pork chops, today.)
- scallions
- fresh ginger
- fresh garlic

- basil
- some dried Chinese mushrooms. I don't know what kind: I don't read Chinese. But these ones are standard mushroom-shaped and have kind of a brownish top with white cracks running across them

Boil water. Soak the mushrooms in boiling water. Weight them down to hold them under.

In the meantime, get your cutting board and two knives, a paring knife and a ten-inch chef's knife. These are the only two knives you will ever *really* need, though a cleaver can be useful sometimes too.

Buy the best knives you can afford without breaking the bank. (Best =/= most expensive.) A good knife stays sharper longer and has better balance and a finer cutting edge, and is therefore safer, easier, and less tiring to use. And keep them sharp: hone regularly (learn how to hone!) and get them sharpened every year. Home sharpeners, not good for your knives! Take them to a pro!

The first thing you are going to do is mince your pork. Do not cut the fat off; dumplings need fat. In fact, my pork chops were so lean that I tossed in a few grams of chicken fat from the roasting chicken. First, cut the meat off the bones (the paring knife is good for tight corners). Then slice it into narrow strips. The sharpest part of your blade for this purpose is the curve about a third of the way in from the tip. Use a smooth motion, drawing the knife toward you. Don't saw. If you have to saw, your knife isn't sharp. Stop and get it sharp before you cut a finger off.

Remember, sharp = safe.

Once you have the strips, bundle them up and cut them across, using a rocking motion of the blade. Then take your small little bits of meat and mince them, using either a rocking motion of the blade (dominant hand on the hilt, nondominant hand **flat** on the back of the blade about 2/3rds of the way down) or a straight up and down chop with your hands in the same position. When the meat gets spread out too thin, scrape it together and go over it again. Alternate left-to-right and top-to-bottom chopping patterns so the meat gets minced both ways.

Continue working through the pile of meat a couple of ounces at a time until it is all minced. Also mince the chicken fat and/or heart, if you added them. Put the chopped meat in a big bowl.

(You could do this all in a food processor, but that would give you a homogenous meat paste like you get in store-bought dumplings, and I like the toothfulness of little bits of this and that. Besides, I like knife work. Knife work is Zen.)

**Go scrub your cutting board and knife with soap and very hot water. Always clean your cutting board and knife between working with meat and working with vegetables.**

Come back, and mince up the garlic and peeled ginger very fine. The easiest way to do the ginger is to peel it, julienne it, and then dice the julienne strips into bits about a millimeter square. The garlic, smush and chop, using the same rocking motion as you did for the pork.

Also dice up the scallions very small. Put all this in the bowl with the pork.

Take the mushrooms out of the water and pull off the woody stems, which you can save for stock too, with the chicken neck and bones. The soft part of the mushrooms, dice up and add to the filling. Chop up the fresh basil fine and put that in, too.

Mix all this up and use it to fill dumplings. Let rise, steam, and freeze, as above.

This filling theory can be applied to other things, too. You could put **this** filling in wontons, if you had wonton wrappers, or in unleavened dumplings of the kind you get fried in Chinese restaurants. Or you could make a filling with beef, sundried tomatoes, caramelized onions, and garlic, seasoned with thyme, and have a completely non-Asian flavor in an Asian steamed bun. Or whatever.

**TAGS:** [recipes](#)



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### [locked] Dream Journal

All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning

Elvis doesn't live here anymore.

Hey there. Sorry about the drama. It was... it was an emotional decision, and I didn't

Puppets. Puppets. Puppet puppets. Scary.

16 comments



 Ometotchtli

December 16 2007, 21:21:46 UTC

COLLAPSE

I begin to notice inexorable narrative structure.

I predict instructions for making stock in the near future...



 cvillette

December 16 2007, 21:26:42 UTC

COLLAPSE

They're on to me!

Well, if I'm pretending it's a book...



 Ometotchtli

December 16 2007, 21:36:15 UTC

COLLAPSE

Also, stock = backbone (hee) of much food deliciousness. You owe it to your fans.



 cvillette

December 16 2007, 21:41:32 UTC

COLLAPSE

Ow.



 cvillette

December 16 2007, 21:32:33 UTC

COLLAPSE

Also, you save the defatted pan drippings for that, as well.



 Ometotchtli

December 16 2007, 21:39:38 UTC

COLLAPSE

Unless you leave the fat in and make gravy. Chicken gravy. Mmmm.



 [trollcatz](#)

[December 16 2007, 21:23:23 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Why is there a chicken heart in this here pork dumpling?

(Because, eeuw, chicken organs!)



[lub dub. lub dub.](#)

 [cvillette](#)

[December 16 2007, 21:24:40 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It's like sausage. You put in what you have.

Also, waste not, want not.



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[December 16 2007, 21:24:49 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

You don't like sauteed chicken livers? I'll eat your share.

*Deleted comment*



 [cvillette](#)

[December 16 2007, 21:36:18 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Those are additions! Extras! Bonuses!

Red bean paste, lotus paste... you name it.



 [cvillette](#)

[December 17 2007, 00:07:16 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Also, I would just like to state, categorically, for the record, that the Ngs and I totally did not eat the leftover mung bean paste out of the can with spoons.

Nuh uh.



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[December 17 2007, 01:02:44 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Course not. It is not at all like leaving three children in the room with the mixing bowl and beaters all gooped with cake batter. I will tell anyone so.



 [cvillette](#)

[December 17 2007, 01:26:44 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Nope.

\*licks spoon\*



[cvillette](#)

[December 17 2007, 01:36:58 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Oh, and to re-comment again, the pork buns can be made vegetarian-friendly by subbing in twice as much mushroom and taking out the pork. They will be crumblier, but still yummy.

Dipping sauce is either soy with julienne gingr steeped in it, or black vinegar with a dash of soy.



[leahbobot](#)

[December 16 2007, 21:43:27 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Yay! Thank you. :) I have a snow day ongoing right now that would only be improved by pork buns.



[cvillette](#)

[December 16 2007, 21:48:35 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

You're welcome!

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